



## OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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## POLICY REVIEW

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN, DCI SECURITY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SECOM Letter to OPM/DoD Interagency Task Group

As co-chairman of the OPM/DoD Interagency Task Group, as well as from the DoD point of view, I am forwarding comments with respect to your draft letter SECOM-D-388 to the OPM/DoD Interagency Task Group in which you recommend a 15 year investigative scope as well as a periodic reinvestigation for access to TOP SECRET information.

While we appreciate the Security Committee's concern and interest in the collateral security clearance program, the position of the Office of the Secretary of Defense remains essentially unchanged from that contained in our memorandum to you of August 11, 1980 concerning the Personnel Security Survey (Encl). It was our contention then, as now, that the 15 year period of coverage appears questionable for access to sensitive compartmented information (SCI) and not necessarily supported by the results of the Personnel Security Survey. This is borne out by the fact that of 5,204 investigations reviewed during the Personnel Security Survey, 254 resulted in an adverse action of which only six (6) required coverage up to 15 years. Since we have been unable to obtain these six cases for further examination and apparently no one on the working group actually reviewed the cases for accuracy, it would seem premature to recommend continuation of the 15 year scope for access to SCI, not to mention TOP SECRET. Due to the very substantial resource implications of such a recommendation on DoD, it is recommended that a follow-on survey be conducted to validate the period of investigative coverage conclusions, to include review of the cases by members of the ISWG.


Applying the 15 year standard for all Background Investigations for access to TOP SECRET would represent a significant increase in investigative coverage (5 years vs 15 years) which would seriously degrade the ability of the Defense Investigative Service (DIS) to conduct timely investigation. At the current level of effort, DIS investigative backlogs continue to increase dramatically so that it now takes in excess of 120 days on the average to complete a background investigation. This situation has caused serious operational difficulties within the military services and intelligence agencies. Adoption of the 15 year investigative scope for TOP SECRET would only serve to exacerbate the present unacceptable delays.

On file OSD release instructions apply.

It has been our experience within DoD that the investigative scope for TOP SECRET frequently reveals a significant amount of information far in excess of the required five year coverage. At the same time our studies have shown that derogatory information beyond the 5 year scope usually does not provide the basis for denial or revocation of a clearance.

Since July 1974, OSD has not required periodic reinvestigations for access to TOP SECRET unless the subject's behavior or activities indicate he or she may pose a potential security risk. We are satisfied that procedures currently in effect for reporting and investigating such information on a case-by-case basis, are adequate without incurring the additional expense and delay to DIS of conducting reinvestigations on a routine basis.

Regarding recommendation three, it is our position that references to SCI and DCID 1/14 are appropriate for inclusion in the OPM/DoD position sensitivity designations inasmuch as they constitute military, civilian and contractor spheres. Exclusion of this population from the study would make them conspicuous by their absence and thus weaken the attempt to comply with GAO recommendations for a more coherent, rational and cost-effective program for determining position sensitivity.

  
Thomas J. O'Brien  
Director  
Security Plans and Programs

Attachment